



Michigan Department of Agriculture

Key Priorities and Programs 2004

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Introduction

The Michigan Department of Agriculture, created in 1921, serves, promotes and protects the food, agricultural, environmental and economic interests of the people of Michigan.

The Department, one of the smaller agencies in state government with an approximate general fund budget of \$31 million and 700 full-time employees, oversees or administers a wide and diverse array of programs that in some way impact all of us, every day. This booklet provides a brief overview of some of these key programs and highlights MDA's top priorities of ensuring food safety and security; animal and plant health and protection; environmental stewardship; a viable agricultural economy; consumer protection; and homeland security.



Dan Wyant,
Director

Snapshot of Michigan's Food & Agriculture Industry

Agriculture in Michigan contributes \$37 billion annually to the state's economy, making it the second-largest industry. Production agriculture and food processing employ about 500,000 Michigan residents.

Michigan produces over 125 commodities on a commercial basis, making the state second only to California in agricultural diversity.

Michigan leads the nation in the production of nine commodities (including tart cherries, blueberries, cucumbers for processing, geraniums and many varieties of dry beans) and ranks in the top 10 of 28 other commodities.

Field crops (corn, dry beans, soybeans, sugarbeets, hay, wheat) are the largest segment of Michigan agriculture, according to production valued at more than \$1 billion annually. They are followed by the dairy industry valued at between \$700 and \$800 million annually and the floriculture and nursery industry at about \$544 million annually.

Michigan exports about one-third of its agricultural commodities each year. In 2002, the state exported more than \$735 million of agricultural products. Ag exports account for approximately 25 percent of the value of Michigan farm receipts. Michigan ranks 5th and 9th nationally in exports of fruits and vegetables respectively. Michigan's largest export commodity is soybean and soy products, which was valued at \$162 million in 2002.

Michigan has about 10.1 million acres of farmland, and the state is home to 53,000 farms averaging 200 acres each. There has been significant growth in the number of small farms over the past few years as well as large farms. More than 40 percent of the state's total farmland is in some form of preservation agreement.

Food Safety and Security

Ensuring a Seamless, Streamlined Food Safety System

- Michigan's food safety program is unique and comprehensive because all its programs covering farm to table food regulation (animal health, feed, pesticides, food processing, dairy, meat, eggs, and retail food and food service) are housed in one agency, the Michigan Department of Agriculture. Only one other state (Pennsylvania) has consolidated its programs in a similar fashion. Such a system helps ensure all-encompassing, coordinated and uniform regulations and actions.

Continually Improving Michigan's Food Safety System

- Michigan's food safety regulatory program took a critical step forward with the passage of the Michigan Food Law of 2000. That comprehensive overhaul of the state's food safety laws helped Michigan enhance its joint state-local partnership by clarifying roles, eliminating duplication, strengthening food safety standards and enforcement ability and focusing more on preventing foodborne illnesses. With this foundation in place, MDA is partnering with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to assess its food safety program in nine key areas (including staff training, science-based inspections, uniformity, compliance and measurement). Essentially, MDA will evaluate and identify key strengths and weaknesses, remedying all weaknesses by 2010.



Using Technology to Enhance Food Safety

- MDA utilizes an electronic, web-based food inspection system called "e-Inspector." Food inspectors throughout the state enter inspection data directly into the system via laptop computers, which is uploaded regularly into a central database, allowing immediate access to food safety information. e-Inspector provides a valuable tool for MDA to make decisions about the relative risk of every retail food establishment in the state; from where to locate inspectors and schedule inspections, to how often establishments need inspection and identifying facilities for possible enforcement actions.

Implementing the Michigan Food and Agricultural Protection Strategy and Stepping up Food Security Surveillance Efforts

- MDA is working to enhance its food safety and security efforts, especially in light of potential agri-terrorism threats after the attacks of Sept. 11. The Department works cooperatively with federal and state agencies as well as a wide cross section of the state's food and agriculture industry to coordinate and boost food security and emergency preparedness efforts. In a particular effort called the "Food Security Summit," a plan and specific action steps were developed to enhance the protection of Michigan's food supply and agricultural infrastructure using a "farm to fork" approach. MDA also has been able to increase its sampling and testing of raw and processed fruits and vegetables for both pesticide residues and foodborne pathogens like *E. coli* and *Salmonella*. An additional benefit will be the increased ability to trace food products to their origin and develop appropriate mitigation strategies to prevent potential pesticide or pathogen contamination in the future.



Preventing and Responding to Foodborne Illnesses

- MDA has spearheaded the rollout of the state's Foodborne Illness Response Strategy (FIRST). FIRST was developed in collaboration with the Michigan Department of Community Health and the Michigan Association for Local Public Health to improve the state's coordination during foodborne illness outbreaks and to minimize their impacts. It features a detailed resource manual and establishes protocol for identifying outbreaks early and implementing effective control measures promptly to prevent further human illness. MDA has also provided extensive training to food and dairy inspectors and local health departments in foodborne illness investigation techniques. Additionally, MDA is launching a new initiative this year to further reduce the risk of foodborne illness. By focusing on the five behaviors and practices – poor personal hygiene, food from unsafe sources, inadequate cooking, improper holding temperatures, and contaminated equipment – that the U.S. Centers for Disease Control have identified most often for causing or contributing to foodborne illness, MDA plans to reduce the prevalence of these risk factors by 25 percent in food establishments by 2011.

During a typical year, MDA inspects about 17,500 licensed food establishments, including supermarkets, convenience stores and food processing operations. The Department also inspects about 3,500 dairy farms, dairy processing plants and bulk milk haulers to ensure the safety and quality of dairy products. MDA, in partnership with 45 local health departments, oversees food service sanitation for Michigan's 47,000 food service establishments, including restaurants, cafeterias, temporary food vendors and commissaries.

Animal, Plant Health and Protection

Eradicating Bovine Tuberculosis

- MDA, in strong partnership with the Michigan departments of Community Health and Natural Resources (DNR), the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Michigan State University, private veterinary practitioners, the state's livestock industry, and hunters, have made significant progress toward eradicating bovine TB from Michigan. The state, with tremendous cooperation from federal, state and private veterinarians and its farmers, has completed testing of all of the state's known cattle, goats, bison and privately owned cervid (deer and elk) herds statewide, representing just under 1 million animals. In addition, the DNR has examined more than 123,200 white-tailed deer for the disease. Due to this thorough and aggressive testing of livestock and wildlife, Michigan has been able to confirm that bovine TB is concentrated in a small area of northeastern Lower Michigan and has refocused its resources accordingly. In addition, these efforts have laid the groundwork for MDA to establish the basis for obtaining "split state status" from the federal government and allowing most of Michigan to regain TB-free status as soon as possible.



Utilizing Electronic Animal Identification

- Michigan is one of the first states in the country to develop and implement an electronic animal identification system. By utilizing this latest technology, a tag imbedded with a radio frequency device and marked with a unique, individual number that will not be duplicated on any other animal worldwide, MDA ensures the most accurate and up-to-date information and its ability to track and trace animals in a matter of hours, rather than days or weeks. The system is an integral part of the Department's surveillance and eradication program for bovine TB as animals are tracked from birth and on farm, from farm to market, and from market to slaughter. Funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the program is currently operating only in the northeastern Lower Peninsula, though the Department is hoping to soon expand the program statewide.



Implementing a Surveillance and Response Strategy for Chronic Wasting Disease

- Under Michigan law, captive or privately owned cervids are considered livestock or farmed deer and elk and currently fall under MDA's jurisdiction. Specifically, MDA oversees the licensing, registration and inspection of the state's approximately 725 privately owned cervid operations. Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) is a fatal disease of white-tailed deer, mule deer and elk that attacks the central nervous system. It has not been found in Michigan to date and there is no evidence that it affects humans or other animals. However, it has been detected in Wisconsin and other Great Lakes states and is emerging as a disease that has the potential to significantly impact both privately owned and wild cervids and cripple segments of the state's agriculture, hunting and tourism industries. Because of this threat, MDA and DNR with input from university researchers, the agriculture industry and outdoor and hunting organizations, have formed a strong partnership to review, develop, enhance and implement comprehensive CWD surveillance (testing of animals to determine the presence/absence and extent of disease), testing and prevention actions. In addition, as an emergency preparedness measure, the state has designed a detailed response/contingency plan should CWD be found in Michigan. Some of MDA's CWD prevention activities to date include: continuing a moratorium on imports of deer and elk; tracing back and testing all animals imported over the past three years from Wisconsin or other CWD-confirmed origin; and conducting mandatory surveillance and testing of all death losses from privately owned cervid herds. To date, MDA has tested nearly 2,000 deer and elk from 72 counties for the disease, all of which have been negative. Additionally, Governor Granholm created a CWD Task Force in 2003 that recently submitted its findings and recommendations to her. MDA will work cooperatively with the Governor's office and DNR to implement any changes determined appropriate and necessary to enhance the state's CWD surveillance and prevention efforts.



Responding to Emerald Ash Borer

- In the summer of 2002, a new exotic insect was identified in six counties – Livingston, Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, Washtenaw and Wayne – in Southeast Michigan. This pest, known as the Emerald Ash Borer, is an invasive species originally from Asia and previously unknown in North America that affects ash trees. To date, it has killed or damaged millions of ash trees in these affected counties. To prevent and control EAB's spread and to minimize its damage and threat to Michigan and North American ash resources, initial aggressive steps were taken, including: an MDA-issued quarantine prohibiting sale and movement of any ash trees and products that includes firewood of all species in the above counties plus an additional seven counties surrounding them; and the creation of an active EAB Task Force to ensure a coordinated and effective response. Task Force members include MDA, DNR, Michigan State University, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service and Forest Service, in cooperation with local units of government and various industry groups, associations and universities. The group has developed a comprehensive, science-based, long-term management and eradication strategy, which includes components of regulatory/quarantine enforcement; ongoing surveys; research; selected infested tree removal and disposal; education and outreach; tree replacement/restoration; and identifying and securing federal funding to successfully implement these elements designed to detect, contain, and ultimately eradicate, EAB.



In the short time since the destructive insect's discovery, much has been learned and significant strides have been made in establishing the foundation and infrastructure necessary to address this pest. Many of the tools, human resources and research efforts are now in place or in motion. For example, teams of survey crews have been hired and are working to identify the "leading edge" of the pest's infestation. To date, these crews have logged data from over 50,000 sites, covering 620,000 acres and involving the examination of over 300,000 trees. Additionally, the state has established five marshaling yards where more than 70,000 tons of infested ash trees and materials have been ground up to provide assistance to the generally infested areas as well as properly and safely dispose of the materials. Key activity for 2004 will be to eradicate (remove trees) and conduct follow-up monitoring the for the isolated "outlier" sites of EAB eradication that have been detected in several counties, including Berrien, Calhoun, Eaton, Kent, and Saginaw. However, the borer's aggressive nature will not subside, and progress must continue to stop EAB's relentless attack on state ash resources.



Ensuring State-of-the-Art Diagnostic and Scientific Capabilities

- MDA's Geagley Laboratory, renovated and updated with the latest technology, plays a key role in meeting a wide array of testing and diagnostic needs of the state's food and agriculture industry, including: testing animal feeds, fertilizers and seed to ensure they meet label claims and testing animal blood for the presence of diseases like brucellosis, pseudorabies, equine infectious anemia and Johne's disease. Additionally, the lab helps protect the food supply through testing of food and dairy products for the presence of pathogenic organisms such as *Salmonella*, *Listeria* and *E. coli*. It is also home to three important, federally-funded monitoring programs: the Pesticide Data Program, the Microbiological Data Program and the Antimicrobial Program. The Geagley Laboratory conducts all the analyses in support of MDA's Motor Fuel Quality testing program and testing that plays a vital role in other Department responsibilities such as pesticide misuse investigations, pesticide formulation, as well as groundwater and farm worker protection. Additionally, the lab cooperates with the Office of the Racing Commissioner to analyze horse blood and urine samples for prohibited substances. The well-trained laboratory staff also develop and/or adopt new diagnostics as demands shift, as evidenced by the testing now being done to determine the presence of ruminant protein in animal feed as an additional precaution to ensure that requirements to protect Michigan from BSE are being followed. The lab is also developing strategies to assist MDA and the state in an emergency such as a terrorist event or natural disaster that may threaten the food supply. In related efforts, the state also allocated \$58 million for the construction of a new laboratory, the Diagnostic Center for Population and Animal Health, to replace an outdated similar facility and to ensure the long-term capability of the state to effectively handle emerging animal and public health issues. The laboratory, housed on the campus of Michigan State University and slated for completion in the spring/summer of 2004, will enhance Michigan's efforts to identify, track and/or eradicate diseases like CWD, bovine TB and West Nile virus. It also will help address other important needs and issues like food safety and export requirements as well as potential acts of bioterrorism and foreign animal diseases like Foot and Mouth.



Managing and Preventing Plant Pests, Invasive Species and Foreign Animal Diseases

- MDA has field inspectors and veterinarians located throughout the state who work to manage or prevent the introduction of plant pests or plant and animal diseases. For example, the Department inspects nursery stock and agricultural commodities being transported within Michigan or heading to another state or foreign country to ensure materials are free of any injurious plant pest or disease. MDA annually inspects and issues about 2,000 certificates certifying exports to nearly 60 countries worldwide and inspects nearly 13,000 acres of nursery stock. MDA conducts hundreds of inspections each year of commercial livestock feed manufacturers and dealers to ensure compliance with federal Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) or "Mad Cow Disease" animal feed regulations and ensure Michigan remains BSE free. In addition to these inspections and as an extra precaution against the disease, MDA will be testing 200 random samples at feed establishments in 2004 to ensure the absence of prohibited products in ruminant feeds. A recently launched program, the Michigan Emergency Veterinary Network or "Vet Net," will help MDA train and utilize private veterinary practitioners as additional sets of eyes, ears and hands to help in the surveillance and response to emerging diseases.



Environmental Stewardship

Advancing the Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program

- The Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP) continues as one of the state's newest and most innovative initiatives to help prevent agriculture-related pollution. It ensures that participating producers are using effective stewardship practices that comply with state and federal environmental laws and standards. The proactive, comprehensive program provides education, on-farm technical assistance, environmental risk assessments, and action plans that are site and farm specific. Once these action plans are developed and implemented, MDA conducts a thorough on-farm inspection to ensure that all requirements are met. If so, the farm becomes "environmentally assured." To retain this designation, the farm must be inspected at least every three years. Ongoing plan review and implementation are key to continued verification. To date, hundreds of farms are in the process of becoming MAEAP verified. The program aims to have all farms, no matter what size or type (livestock, crop, fruit and/or vegetable, etc.), participate statewide. The newest part of the program, called MAEAP Progressive Planning, targets small and medium-sized farms. These farmers work with trained local professionals to develop site specific environmental goals and a plan toward step-by-step achievement. MAEAP is also an integral component in ensuring that the state's larger livestock farms are complying with environmental laws and engaging in environmentally-sound practices. In fact, the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency are currently implementing a requirement that all Michigan farms over 1,000 animal units (CAFOs – Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations) obtain a permit or participate in MAEAP Livestock System if they meet certain conditions. Part of this effort entails on-farm inspections by the DEQ and MDA, approximately 100/year.



Preserving Farmland and Open Spaces

- MDA currently staffs three main programs that work to preserve farmland and open spaces: the Farmland and Open Space Preservation Act, commonly known as "P.A. 116;" the Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program, and the Michigan Agricultural Preservation Fund and Board. Tax incentive enhancements to P.A. 116 have increased new enrollments in the program and are encouraging landowners to extend/retain their agreements that were set to expire. Specifically, 316 new applications in 2002 and 282 new applications in 2003 were filed, while the average for the years 1997-2000 was 155. Currently, the state holds more than 47,000 of these agreements, preserving over 4 million acres of farmland – about 40 percent of Michigan's 10.1 million acres of agricultural production land. In fact, Michigan ranks third in the nation in the number of acres protected by this type of agreement. The PDR program offers an alternative method for protecting farmland by purchasing the development rights in perpetuity on selected parcels of land across the state, permanently restricting any non-agricultural development. Since the program began, Michigan has acquired 67 development rights easements, 10 of which have been donated, protecting over 15,200 acres at an investment of more than \$27 million. Out of the 19 states with similar programs, Michigan ranks 9th in the number of acres protected. Michigan has also obtained more than \$5.5 million from the U.S. Farm and Ranch Land Protection Program. Additionally, the Michigan Agricultural Preservation Fund Board (comprised of a diverse nine-member group of stakeholders representing agriculture, conservation, local unit of government, realtor, homebuilder, and university interests) is in the midst of finalizing its standards, guidelines, application process and scoring system for selecting grant applications from local units of government for community PDR programs. This proposal differs from the state PDR program in that it is driven by local community initiatives.



Implementing the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program

- CREP implements environmentally sound practices on agricultural lands to improve water quality, prevent soil erosion, and enhance wildlife habitat. More than 2,300 farmers have already enrolled nearly 50,000 acres in three priority watersheds (Lake Macatawa, River Raisin and Saginaw Bay). More conservation has been put on the land in these three CREP watersheds in the program's first two years than all federal conservation programs for the last five years statewide. Specifically, more than 2,300 miles – or about the distance from Saginaw, MI to Los Angeles, CA – of 100-foot wide filter strips and riparian buffers have been implemented, as well as 10,000 acres of wetlands restored and 8,200 acres of native and introduced grasses planted. These practices have reduced soil erosion on high-risk farmland, increased soil productivity and improved surface and groundwater quality in and downstream of agricultural areas. CREP has leveraged over \$120 million in federal funds to establish environmentally-protective practices and incentives in 29 counties in Michigan. It is the largest voluntary environmental improvement program in the state's history and represents the significant pollution prevention and water quality and wildlife habitat enhancements that can be accomplished with collaboration between the state and federal government and industry partners.



Enhancing Groundwater Protection

- MDA's Michigan Groundwater Stewardship Program (MGSP) has achieved success and national recognition as one of the most effective and efficient groundwater protection programs in the country. It has provided one-on-one technical assistance to over 12,500 farmers to help them identify risks to groundwater associated with their pesticide and nitrogen fertilizer use practices, and it coordinates local, state, and federal resources to help individuals reduce those risks. Two key components of the program are Clean Sweep and Pesticide Container Recycling, which work jointly to collect and properly dispose of outdated pesticides that may cause potential harm to the environment and to recycle containers that burden landfills. The program, in cooperation with county and local units of government, has also established 15 permanent Clean Sweep sites located throughout the state. More than 400 tons of outdated or unused pesticides and mercury have been removed from circulation and properly disposed of at these sites, and more than 430,000 pounds of containers have been properly recycled. Because of MGSP, 6,466 abandoned wells have also been properly decommissioned. In addition, MDA's Pesticide Registration Program monitors and registers pesticides offered for sale in the state. Through this program, the Department is able to cancel or restrict the use of any pesticide determined to harm people or the environment. Such an incident happened in 2003 when MDA canceled three herbicides containing the active ingredient Dimethyl tetrachloroterephthalate (DCPA) or known by the trade name Dacthal, after a joint investigation with the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality and local health departments detected it in groundwater at several Michigan locations. These products may no longer be distributed, sold or used in Michigan.



Ensuring a Farmer's Right to Farm

- Michigan's Right to Farm law is one of the strongest in the country and serves as a national model. It ensures sound environmental stewardship while simultaneously recognizing the importance of a farmer's right to farm. Michigan farmers receive protection from nuisance lawsuits by following scientifically-based Generally Accepted Agricultural Management Practices (GAAMPs), which are reviewed and updated annually. Since 1988, MDA has responded to nearly 2,000 environmental complaints, with about 98 percent resolved without enforcement or legal action in a common sense, cost-effective manner that protects the environment. To help reduce conflicts between farmers and non-farm neighbors and ensure the proper siting of animal agriculture facilities, a GAAMP for Site Selection and Odor Control at New or Expanding Livestock Production Facilities was developed and implemented over the past few years. This site approval process considers an area's population density, environmental conditions and potential impacts on neighboring land uses. And to further improve the program, a new GAAMP for Irrigation Water Use was developed and adopted in 2003. This GAAMP focuses on stewardship of water resources and promoting sound irrigation system management practices, including efficient and effective environmental performance to protect water quality, conserve water resources, promote soil and plant quality, and enhance crop yields.



Developing Local Conservation Partnerships

- Local conservation districts are critical to the delivery of many MDA environmental stewardship programs as they are a cost-effective way to get one-on-one technical resources on the land to protect water quality, enhance wildlife habitat and preserve and improve Michigan's diverse agricultural and natural resources. The Department works to train all local technicians so they can deliver a wide range of pollution prevention tools to landowners and assist them in accessing federal cost-share incentives.



Enhancing Air Quality through Gasoline and Vapor Recovery/Reduction Program

- An offshoot of the Department's Motor Fuels Quality program is the Gasoline Vapor Recovery and Reduction Program, which works to improve air quality in seven Southeast Michigan counties as part of federal requirements. In these counties, gasoline vaporization is restricted from June 1 to September 15 and special systems are required to prevent 30 tons of pollutants per day from evaporating into the atmosphere. This program benefits area consumers and residents by preventing health risks caused by breathing gasoline vapor or smog created by vapors.

Viabie Agriculture Development

Promoting and Adding Value to Michigan Agriculture

Launching and Expanding the “Select a Taste of Michigan” Program

- In 2003, MDA and Governor Granholm piloted the “Select a Taste of Michigan” Program in the Grand Rapids area. Focusing on retailers, this pilot was a collaborative partnership between the Department and numerous agricultural organizations, educational institutions, large west Michigan retailers, food manufacturers, growers and environmental groups. All collaborated to develop and implement educational campaigns to promote locally grown conventional and certified organic food products to Michigan consumers and retailers. The goals of the program were to increase sales of Michigan-grown food products; increase or retain farm and food business income and jobs; provide homeland security; and preserve farmland and rural businesses. Sixty-eight retail stores and approximately 152 growers directly participated in the 2003 campaign. Through these efforts, impact at point-of-sale was achieved that, in turn, increased consumer awareness and product purchase. In turn, this increased sales and income to the growers. For example, the Michigan asparagus promotion increased product sales by 65 percent and kept the price per case of Michigan product 28 percent above their competitors (California and Ontario). MDA is planning to expand the program in 2004 to the Detroit/Southeast Michigan area.



Expanding Value-Added Initiatives

- Helping farmers and the agriculture industry add more value to Michigan grown or processed agriculture commodities is a continued focus of MDA. This may include turning soybeans into soybean meal and oil, turning corn into ethanol with the plant in Caro, or starting up a grower-owned, value-added processing cooperative to save the Michigan Sugar Company in the Thumb or like the Michigan Turkey Producers Cooperative, Inc. in Wyoming. MDA also works closely with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, Michigan State University (MSU), USDA Rural Development, the agriculture industry, and local organizations to help attract, expand or retain food processing companies as well as develop new products and markets for Michigan commodities. MDA is also part of the new agricultural innovation center – the Product Center for Agriculture and Natural Resources – at MSU that will provide technical and business development assistance to increase and improve the ability of the state’s farmers to develop markets and processes for value-added Michigan-grown commodities and products.

Developing International and Domestic Markets

- MDA strives to promote the export of Michigan commodities and value-added goods by helping identify, facilitate and develop new domestic and new market development. Exporting continues to be critical to Michigan agriculture as nearly one-third of what the state grows is sold in foreign markets. Through several federal export market development programs, Michigan food and agriculture companies/organizations have been able to significantly increase or develop their overseas markets and leverage private and federal dollars on a more than 3 to 1 basis. For example, 29 Michigan companies participated in the USDA-sponsored 2002-2003 Market Access Program. Three of those companies were able to seal the deal on their first ever export deal. Six companies increased their sales by 20 percent. Together, the companies increased sales by almost \$4 million and added 133 new employees.



Creating Agricultural Alliances

- MDA strives to foster alliances with producers, industry organizations and other agencies to ensure coordinated and strong cooperative efforts regarding particular issues and initiatives. Because of the state's agricultural diversity and these effective partnerships, the federal government allocated a \$3.75 million block grant program to MDA to administer and provide resources for Michigan specialty crop producers and commodity organizations. Through this funding, more than 6,000 farmers have been directly impacted and new market research and development has occurred, including the Mexican market being opened for the first time to Michigan fresh apples in 2004 and adapting microwave technology to create ready-to-eat hot asparagus from frozen packages for consumers looking for convenience, value and taste.



Helping Market Michigan Grown and Processed Commodities

- MDA administers the Agricultural Commodities Marketing Act (Public Act 232 of 1965) and other similar assessment and check-off programs for 15 commodity organizations. Some of the Department's oversight responsibilities include ensuring organizations' compliance with budget and audit requirements and holding renewal referenda every five years or whenever a program or an assessment change is proposed. Through producer-run committees, nearly \$11 million of producer dollars are approved and spent on various promotion, research and marketing activities for their respective commodities, which include apples, asparagus, dry edible beans, beef, carrots, cherries, corn, cranberries, dairy products, deer and elk, onions, plums, potatoes, soybeans and veal.

Growing Michigan's Grape and Wine Industry

- The Michigan Grape and Wine Industry Council has been established within MDA to provide for research, education and promotion of the state's wine grape and wine industry, stimulating value-added, sustainable agriculture. A web-based Wine Industry Resource Manual has recently been developed to assist in the expansion of the industry through new investment. The wine industry overall has grown significantly in recent years, with wineries in all 50 states. Grapes are now the highest value fruit crop in the nation. The state has 13,500 acres of vineyards, making Michigan the fourth largest grape-growing state, and is now home to 40 commercial wineries. Michigan wines continue to win acclaim and recognition from international and national wine writers and at prestigious wine competitions. The economic impact of this industry is estimated at \$75 million annually in Michigan.



Assisting Growers with Market Access

- MDA operates a fruit and vegetable inspection program that provides an unbiased, third party inspection service for the state's worldwide produce industry. Inspections are based on federal and state standards, processor specifications and/or industry needs. The inspection program is mostly voluntary, with mandatory inspections being performed for export, school lunch, government purchase, and federal diversion programs.

Promoting Agricultural Tourism

- Agriculture and tourism are recognized as Michigan's second and third leading industries. When combined, they create a powerful tool to enhance Michigan's farmgate value, helping create economic stability in the state's food and agriculture industry and keeping farmers farming. Agri-tourism destinations help enhance Michigan's reputation as a great place to go for great things to do, provide excellent and nutritional products, and offer fun as well as a connection to our state's rich agricultural heritage and educational opportunities for farm families to showcase farmland stewardship and the value of homegrown food. MDA's most popular publication is the *Michigan Farm Market and U-Pick Directory*, which provides a useful listing of many Michigan farm markets, farmers markets, u-pick operations and other agri-tourism entities. It is also searchable online.

Encouraging State, County Fair Participation and Youth Involvement in Agriculture

- Michigan's 87 county and local fairs, along with the Michigan State Fair in Detroit and the Upper Peninsula State Fair in Escanaba, help keep Michigan residents connected to their agricultural roots. Nearly half of the state's population attends at least one of Michigan's fairs each year. The average Michigan fair has 253 volunteers contributing approximately 6,500 hours and \$21,450 of in-kind contributions to help make the fair a success. In addition, youth livestock sales at fairs generate nearly \$10 million.



Ensuring the Integrity of the Horse Racing Industry

- In accordance with Michigan law, the Office of Racing Commissioner (ORC) is an independent agency housed within MDA and established to authorize and regulate pari-mutuel horse racing in Michigan. ORC, in partnership with MDA's Fairs, Exhibitions and Racing Division, helps ensure the integrity and success of Michigan's nearly \$1.2 billion horse racing industry, which represents about 26,200 jobs, through various activities, including: issuing track, race meeting, occupational license, and simulcasting permits; allocating racing dates and simulcasting schedules; collecting racing license and tax revenues; appointing stewards and veterinarians to represent the state; monitoring the daily conduct of live and simulcast racing; conducting equine and human drug testing programs; investigating any irregularities in racing; and developing ways to improve and promote pari-mutuel horse racing in Michigan. Michigan is currently home to seven tracks; one thoroughbred, one mixed breed and five standardbred or harness racing tracks; and 28 county and local fairs host standardbred racing.



Consumer Protection

Preventing Pesticide Misuse and Adverse Health, Environmental Impacts

- MDA, under an agreement with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, is responsible for regulating the safe distribution, sale, and use of pesticides in Michigan. To help protect human health and the environment from potential risks related to pesticide misuse, MDA: conducts pesticide use/misuse investigations; inspects pesticide production and retail facilities to ensure proper labeling and registration of pesticides; licenses pesticide applicator businesses and restricted-use dealers; requires training, examination and certification of commercial pesticide applicators; audits restricted-use pesticide dealer sales and commercial applicator records; addresses pesticide use violations related to food safety and farm worker protection; and implements federal and state compliance monitoring initiatives.

Addressing West Nile Virus and Other Mosquito-Borne Diseases

- MDA, in conjunction with federal, state, and local governments, and other organizations, is an active participant in the state's West Nile virus surveillance and response plan and activities. In 2003, MDA helped launch a new web-based reporting system – www.michigan.gov/westnilevirus – designed to facilitate rapid and accurate transmission of disease information and triggers. MDA also helps provide training for local health departments that facilitates disease and vector management, and provides direction in local community decision making regarding source reduction and possible larvicide and pesticide applications. Additionally, MDA and many other partners conduct disease monitoring for other mosquito-borne viruses like Eastern Equine Encephalitis and St. Louis Encephalitis infections among bird, mosquito, horse and human populations.

Inspecting for Gasoline Quality and Quantity

- MDA ensures that gasoline sold in Michigan meets quality and quantity standards, protecting consumers against economic losses and industry against unfair trade practices. The Department maintains a toll-free hotline (1-800-MDA-FUEL), posted on each gasoline pump, for consumers to report suspected gasoline problems. In FY 2003, 4.7 billion gallons of gas were sold in Michigan, more than 800 complaints were received against gasoline retailers, and 12 percent of gasoline tested failed to meet quality performance standards (equating to about 564 million gallons of gas @\$1.50 per gallon = \$846 million). The Department's Motor Fuels Quality Program also ensures that the 7.8 Reid Vapor Pressure (RVP) requirements are met during the control period from June 1 to Sept. 15, helping ensure cleaner air for Michigan residents. Additionally, in response to the Governor's desire to enhance consumer protection at the pump, MDA and the Michigan Public Service Commission are working together to monitor gas prices in the state and ensure that motorists pay a fair price for gasoline. Consumers can now file gasoline gouging complaints online at www.michigan.gov/gasprices where they will be investigated and forwarded on to the Michigan Attorney General's office if determined to be potentially excessive and/or out of line with current market circumstances.



Ensuring Fairness and Standardization in the Marketplace

- MDA ensures that all transactions based upon weight, measure or count are done fairly and accurately, ensuring that consumers get what they pay for and that businesses are able to compete on a level playing field. Weights and measures activities have an estimated economic impact of \$171 billion annually in Michigan. In 2003, MDA responded to 860 complaints alleging short weight, short measure or item pricing violations. MDA also inspected over 10,600 devices at more than 2,550 establishments, with about 17 percent of devices tested failing to meet statutory requirements. The Department's Metrology Laboratory is one of the finest and busiest in the nation, supporting the second highest precision mass workload of the 50 states. The laboratory is nationally accredited and directly supports MDA's weights and measures enforcement program while providing calibration services for Michigan's high tech and manufacturing industries.



Assuring Producer Security

- MDA provides security to Michigan producers through efficient and uniform regulatory programs that allow them and agricultural businesses to compete on a fair and level national and international scale. Producer security programs overseen by MDA regulated grain dealers, whole sale potato dealers, livestock auctions and manufacturing and fluid milk plants. MDA also administers producer protection mechanisms within the Agricultural Marketing and Bargaining Act and the Agricultural Commodities Marketing Act. In 2003, MDA licensed approximately 230 grain dealers who handle greater than 80 percent of the state's field crop industry. A farm produce insurance fund was also enacted in 2003 to provide protection to producers for losses from a grain dealer failure. MDA also works to protect producers by helping ensure the integrity of agricultural inputs such as feed, fertilizer, seed and animal remedies.

Homeland Security

Helping Protect and Secure Michigan's Food and Agriculture Industry and Infrastructure

- In the aftermath of Sept. 11, the concept of homeland security has taken on renewed emphasis at MDA. The cornerstones of the Department's efforts center on: ensuring aggressive and comprehensive surveillance and inspection systems, effective consumer and industry education and outreach, appropriate scientific and laboratory support, and well-organized emergency preparedness and response. Recognizing that food and agriculture are a critical infrastructure of both Michigan and the nation, MDA serves as the catalyst for the continued development and pursuit of Michigan's Food and Agriculture Protection Strategy, a collaborative Homeland Security initiative uniting and coordinating the efforts of federal, state, and local agencies along with universities and industry organizations. MDA also continues to integrate emergency management concepts, including Incident Command System training, into all levels of the Department with ongoing planning, training and exercises. The Department is working to make crucial food and farming data readily available in an emergency through Geographical Information System efforts. Specifically related to animal health, MDA has spearheaded the development of two unique efforts – Vet Net (mentioned earlier) and the purchase and stocking of mobile emergency response trailers and individual veterinarian kits – that will help enhance the state's preparedness in the event of an animal disease outbreak or animal-related bioterrorism incident. MDA also actively participates in the Michigan Homeland Protection Board and chairs the Agriculture and Food Supply Subcommittee.

Michigan Commission of Agriculture

The Michigan Commission of Agriculture is a five-member, gubernatorially-appointed board that provides oversight and executive direction for MDA and its programs. The Commission holds regular meetings, many of which are in Lansing, with the remainder held in various locations across the state to gain input and feedback from all segments and areas of the state's food and agriculture industry. All meetings are open to the public and time is set aside on the agenda for public comment. Citizens and/or organizations wishing to observe or discuss matters under the Commission's jurisdiction are encouraged to attend. For a list and contact information of members as well as meeting dates, times and agenda items, please visit www.michigan.gov/mda or contact the Commission Liaison at (517) 241-0119.

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